

Message Text

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ACTION CU-03

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FM AMEMBASSY SOFIA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8917

INFO AMEMBASSY WARSAW

USIA WASHDC

AMEMBASSY VIENNA

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E.O. 11652: NA

TAGS: OEXC, BU

SUBJECT: CULTURAL EXCHANGE WITH BULGARIA: VISIT OF YALE RICHMOND

STATE FOR CU/EE, CU/IVP, CU/ARTS (INFO: EUR/EE)

USIA FOR IEE, ICS

VIENNA FOR RPO

WARSAW PASS RICHMOND

REF: A) SOFIA 2137; B) SOFIA 2138; C) STATE 252989; D) SOFIA 2075;

E) SOFIA 2077; F) SOFIA 1985; G) SOFIA 2109; H) STATE 249931;

I) STATE 136370

1. SUMMARY: SOFIA VISIT BY CU/EE DIRECTOR RICHMOND NOVEMBER 21-23 PROVIDED OPPORTUNITY TO SOUND OUT BULGARIANS ON PROSPECTS FOR INCREASED EDUCATIONAL, CULTURAL AND SCIENTIFIC EXCHANGES, EVEN IN ADVANCE OF NEGOTIATION AND CONCLUSION OF INTERGOVERNMENTAL EXCHANGES AGREEMENT WHICH GOB HAS PROPOSED. RICHMOND MADE CALLS ON BULGARIAN OFFICIALS RESPONSIBLE FOR EXCHANGES. RESPONSE WAS UNIFORMLY POSITIVE, AND BOTH SIDES MADE SOME SPECIFIC PROPOSALS.

2. TONE OF VISIT WAS SET AT LUNCH AMBASSADOR HOSTED THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 21 ATTENDED BY BALEVSKI, CHAIRMAN, BULGARIAN ACADEMY OF SCIENCES (BAN); RECTOR SENDOV, SOFIA UNIVERSITY;
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KONSTANTINOV, CHIEF, SECOND DEPT (NON-SOCIALIST COUNTRIES),

COMMITTEE FOR FREINDSHIP AND CULTURAL RELATIONS WITH FOREIGN COUNTRIES; AND DAMYANOV, DEPUTY CHIEF, CULTURAL COOPERATION DEPT, FONQDIN. BALEVSKI AND SENDOV WERE MOST POSITIVE IN EXPRESSING INTEREST IN INCREASED EXCHANGES; LATTER PROPOSED DIRECT INSTITUTIONAL EXCHANGE ARRANGEMENT BETWEEN SOFIA UNIVERSITY AND AN AMERICAN UNIVERSITY, FOR WHICH HE SAID GOB APPROVAL HAS BEEN GIVEN.

3. RICHMOND SUBSEQUENTLY CALLED ON DAMYANOV; KONSTANTINOV; SENDOV; POPOV, CHIEF, INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION DEPT, COMMITTEE FOR SCIENCE, TECHNICAL PROGRESS AND HIGHER EDUCATION (CSTPHE); BERBENLIEV, DEPUTY CHAIRMAN, COMMITTEE FOR ART AND CULTURE (CAC), AND DIRECTOR, INSTITUTE FOR CULTURAL MONUMENTS; KAMOVA, DESK OFFICER FOR ENGLISH-SPEAKING COUNTRIES AT FREINDSHIP COMMITTEE; AND KARAKASHEV, ACTING CHIEF, INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS DEPT, BAN. DISCUSSIONS FOCUSED ON WHAT BOTH SIDES MIGHT DO NOW, AND THERE WAS GENERAL AGREEMENT ON SERIES OF "ORIENTATION" VISITS (KAMOVA'S TERM) BY BOTH SIDES TO PAVE WAY FOR MORE FORMAL EXCHANGES. ONLY KONSTANTINOV MADE STRONG PITCH FOR INTERGOVERNMENTAL AGREEMENT AND FINANCIAL (NOT NUMERICAL) RECIPROCITY, ARGUING (A) GOB NEEDS AGREEMENT AND ANNUAL PLAN OF EXCHANGES FOR PLANNING AND BUDGETING; (B) USG SHOULD PROVIDE SAME FACILITIES (E.G., FOR EXHIBITS) AS GOB CAN PROVIDE; (C) INTERGOVERNMENTAL AGREEMENT WOULD PERMIT USG TO DIRECT IREX, UNIVERSITIES, ETC., TO INCREASE EXCHANGES WITH BULGARIA.

4. FOLLOWING PROPOSALS WERE MADE, SOME OF WHICH EMBASSY WILL FOLLOW UP AND SOME WHICH REQUIRE DEPARTMENTAL ACTION: (A) EMBASSY AND BULGARIANS WILL AGREE ON FIELDS OF INTEREST FOR INDIVIDUAL BULGARIANS TO BE INVITED TO VISIT U.S. FOR 30 DAYS UNDER DEPARTMENT'S INTERNATIONAL VISITOR PROGRAM (IVP), AND BULGARIAN SIDE WILL SUGGEST SPECIFIC LIST OF INVITEES, MOST OF WHOM WILL KNOW ENGLISH (OR OTHER MAJOR LANGUAGE). POTENTIAL FIELDS OF INTEREST INCLUDE PERFORMING ARTS, AGRICULTURE, ECONOMICS, HIGHER EDUCATION AND PERHAPS SELECTED SCIENTIFIC FIELDS. PURPOSE OF VISITS WILL BE GENERAL OVERVIEW, RATHER THAN FOR SPECIFIC PROJECT, FOLLOWING LINE OF JANUARY VISIT BY NIKIFOR STOITCHKOV (REFTELS A, B). NO NUMBERS WERE DISCUSSED, WITHOUT KNOWLEDGE OF CU BUDGET, BUT EMBASSY ANTICIPATES 6-8 FULL IVP GRANTS DURING FY-1975.

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(?) EMBASSY WILL SOLICIT BULGARIAN NOMINATION FOR MULTI-REGIONAL FOOD PROJECT (REFTEL C).

(C) EMBASSY WILL CONTINUE TO INVITE SHORT-TERM U.S. LECTURERS THROUGH STAG AND VOLSPKR PROGRAMS TO LECTURE AT BULGARIAN INSTITUTIONS, FOLLOWING ON SUCCESSFUL RECENT VISITS BY VOLSPKR JOSEPH RAFFAELE AND USIA MUSIC ADVISOR DARYL DAYTON (REFTELS D, E).

(D) CU/EE WILL INFORMALLY SOUND OUT U.S. UNIVERSITIES TO

ASCERTAIN INTEREST IN DIRECT INSTITUTIONAL EXCHANGE ARRANGEMENT WITH SOFIA UNIVERSITY. THIS WOULD INCLUDE EXCHANGE OF LECTURERS AND RESEARCH SCHOLARS IN AMERICAN AND BULGARIAN STUDIES, AS WELL AS SCIENCES. SENDOV ALSO PROPOSED INCLUDING STUDENTS FOR GROUP VISITS OF TWO-THREE WEEKS DURING SUMMERS, TYPICAL PRACTICE IN SOFIA'S ASSOCIATIONS WITH UNIVERSITIES IN BOTH SOCIALIST AND WEST EUROPEAN COUNTRIES.

(E) CU/EE WILL PROVIDE EMBASSY WITH LISTS OF U.S. FULBRIGHT LECTURERS IN EUROPE THIS YEAR, AND SOFIA UNIVERSITY AND BAN WILL INVITE SELECTED LECTURERS TO BULGARIA FOR ONE-WEEK VISITS. SENDOV AND KARAKASHEV SAID THEIR INSTITUTIONS WOULD COVER LOCAL COSTS, PROVIDED U.S. SIDE COVERS TRANSPORTATION TO/FROM SOFIA.

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(F) SENDOV ALSO GAVE ASSURANCE SOFIA UNIVERSITY WOULD ACCEPT U.S. LECTURER IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE OR AMERICAN LITERATURE FOR FULL ACADEMIC YEAR ON "PERMANENT" BASIS, AND HE IS PREPARED SEND TO U.S. LECTURER IN BULGARIAN LANGUAGE, LITERATURE OR HISTORY, ALSO ON CONTINUING BASIS. OTHER FIELD OF INTEREST TO SOFIA UNIVERSITY ARE MATHEMATICS, PHYSICS, CHEMISTRY AND BIOLOGY. SUCH AN EXCHANGE MIGHT BE WAY STATION TO FULL ASSOCIATION. (RICHMOND WILL FOLLOW UP.)

(G) SOFIA UNIVERSITY WOULD WELCOME U.S. STUDENTS OF RUSSIAN LANGUAGE. SINCE PLACES FOR U.S. STUDENTS OF RUSSIAN UNDER PRIVATE PROGRAMS AT SOVIET UNIVERSITIES ARE LIMITED, SOME U.S.

PRIVATE PROGRAMS MAY WISH TO SEND THEIR STUDENTS HERE, WHERE LARGE NUMBER FOREIGN STUDENTS ALREADY ARE STUDYING RUSSIAN. LOCAL CONDITIONS ARE MORE HOSPITABLE THAN THE USSR, TRAVEL IS NOT AS CONTROLLED, AND COSTS ARE LESS. (RICHMOND WILL FOLLOW UP.)

(H) BAN OFFICIALS MENTIONED THEIR NEGOTIATIONS WITH U.S. NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION (NSF) FOR INTER-INSTITUTIONAL AGREEMENT, INDICATING DESIRE TO MOVE FORWARD. EMBASSY BELIEVES BAN-NSF AGREEMENT SHOULD BE DELAYED AND INCLUDED IN EVENTUAL INTERGOVERNMENTAL AGREEMENT, SINCE THESE TIES WOULD BE CLEARLY MORE IN BULGARIANS' FAVOR.

(I) POPOV AT CSTPHE BROUGHT UP CHURCH OF BRETHREN AGRICULTURAL SPECIALIST EXCHANGE PROGRAM, WHICH BULGARIANS LET LAPSE SOME YEARS AGO. IF BULGARIANS CONFIRM THEIR POSITIVE INTEREST IN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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THIS PROGRAM BY SUPPLYING EMBASSY WITH NAME OF RELEVANT BULGARIAN OFFICIAL, CU/EE WILL RELAY NAME TO BRETHREN OFFICIALS.

(J) EMBASSY CONTINUES STRONG INTEREST IN BRINGING TO SOFIA AN OUTSTANDING PERFORMING ARTIST, WHOSE PRESENCE WOULD PROVIDE POLITICAL SIGNAL TO BULGARIAN GOVERNMENTAL AND INTELLECTUAL BUREAUCRACIES (REFTELS F AND G) AND CONTINUES AWAIT PROMISED DEPARTMENT RESPONSE THIS POINT (REFTEL H, PARA 3). SINCE COST/BENEFIT RATIO FROM MAJOR PERFORMANCE WOULD BE HIGH, WHILE SUCH RATIO FROM LESS WELL-KNOWN OFFERING WOULD BE LOW, QUESTION OF FUNDING SHOULD BE VIEWED IN LIGHT OF PARTICULAR REQUIREMENT OF SOFIA AT THIS TIME. CU/ARTS AND RPO SHOULD ALSO CONTINUE NOTIFY EMBASSY OF SUCH ARTISTS TRAVELING TO THIS AREA, ALTHOUGH RELATIVELY LOW BULGARIAN COMMERCIAL OFFERS AND SOFIA P&RFSECTION'S BUDGETARY SITUATION MAKES SOFIA VISIT WITHOUT CU/ARTS FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE DOUBTFUL. (REFTEL F BEING POUCHED RPO.)

(K) THRACIAN ART EXHIBIT (REFTEL F, PARA 1) IS MAJOR PRESENTATION WHICH SHOULD ENJOY GREAT SUCCESS IN U.S. RICHMOND GAVE BERBENLIEV SMITHSONIAN'S LIST OF QUESTIONS RE EXHIBIT (REFTEL I), AND LATTER PROMISED GIVE EMBASSY THIS WEEK ANSWERS AND COPY OF EXHIBIT CATALOG (IN FRENCH), WHICH EMBASSY WILL FORWARD TO DEPARTMENT. (OTHER MATERIALS PROMISED REFTEL H, PARA 2, NOT YET RECEIVED.)

5. ON CULTURAL AGREEMENT, RICHMOND WILL REPORT ON BULGARIAN ATTITUDES AND HIS CONCLUSIONS UPON RETURN TO WASHINGTON.

6. COMMENT: RICHMOND NOTED THAT BULGARIANS APPEAR TO HAVE HIGH EXPECTATIONS THAT THRACIAN EXHIBIT WILL BE SHOWN IN U.S. AND MAY REGARD THIS AS TOUCHSTONE OF U.S. SINCERITY INCULTURAL FIELD. WHILE WE HAVE GIVEN THEM ENCOURAGEMENT IN THIS ENDEAVOR, WE HAVE ALSO EXPLAINED PRIVATE NATURE OF U.S. MUSEUMS AND STRESSED THERE IS NO COMMITMENT BY U.S. SIDE AT THIS TIME.

7. IN GENERAL, BULGARIANS APPEAR TO WANT TO MOVE AHEAD WITH EXCHANGES, PENDING CONCLUSION OF INTERGOVERNMENTAL AGREEMENT, BUT SOME ARE CAUTIOUS, IMPLYING CONCERN THEY MIGHT BE OVERWHELMED

WITH EXCHANGES FROM LARGER U.S. PARTNER. RICHMOND SOUGHT TO ASSURE THEM THAT ANY INCREASE WOULD BE MODEST AND IN LINE WITH BULGARIAN DESIRES AND RESOURCES. THIS REINFORCED CONTINUING EMBASSY APPROACH OF SEEKING BULGARIAN SUGGESTIONS, RATHER THAN LEAVING BULGARIANS IN SOMEWHAT DEFENSIVE POSITION OF ONLY RESPONDING TO U.S. INITIATIVES.
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8. EMBASSY CONSIDERS RICHMOND VISIT WAS HIGHLY SUCCESSFUL IN FOCUSING FOR THE BULGARIANS U.S. EXCHANGE PROGRAMS, POSSIBILITIES AND MECHANISMS.
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